

**St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, Douglas, GA**

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: Mark 10:46-52

***“For the Rest of Your Life”***

In today’s Holy Gospel Jesus and His followers were leaving Jericho –near the Jordan River and the Dead Sea, and they heard the call of a blind man – the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, Bar meaning son of, Timaeus being his father. He was seeking the help of Jesus, calling out "*Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!*" (Mark 10:47) People surrounding him told him to be quiet but he shouted even louder, "*Son of David, have mercy on me!*" (Mark 10:48) Just like the woman who had the bleeding issue for 12 years who crawled just to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment, and Jairus, whose daughter was dying if not already dead, he was seeking the mercy of Jesus Christ to do what they could not do, to go where they could not go.

Jesus asks this blind beggar ‘*What do you want me to do for you?*’ As if He didn’t know. He asked him – because He wanted him to tell Him, just as He wants us to tell Him about our needs in our lives. He knows our hearts – but He wants to hear from us – just like the Jewish mother nother – “you never call!” He wants to hear from you. In effect – this question included some other unspoken questions - do you, Bartimaeus, want to give up begging? Do you want to have to live differently, to work for a living, to have no reason to sit by the roadside all day seeking compassion from people passing by for a shekel, if not more? This is presenting Bartimaeus with a challenge, and Bartimaeus rises to that challenge. He wants the new life; not only sight, but the chance to follow Jesus. You know what - isn’t that what we all want? The chance to follow our Savior, who has already give so much to us and for us.

Imagine seeing for the first time in many years? Imagine Bartimaeus seeing Jesus and then joining Him on His way up to Jerusalem. I want to suggest to you that Bartimaeus is a model to imitate. Unlike the disciples, who hadn’t really yet understood what Jesus was all about, Bartimaeus is already a man of faith, courage, and true discipleship. He recognizes in his heart of hearts that Jesus is the ‘son of King David,’ and therefore, He is the Messiah. Bartimaeus clearly believes Jesus can help him and hopes to hear Jesus tell him “your faith has healed you.” Just think, he leaves his begging, whatever he spread on the ground to receive money, his cloak, and got up to follow Jesus on the road.

Understanding the terrain and the weather - Jericho is across from the Jordan River, this is the place that in Joshua, they came across and they spied on the city of Jericho, and then they went around the walls and the walls fell. It was in the Jordan, right across from Jericho that the Levites carried the Ark of the Covenant across the river into the Promised Land. When the feet of the priests carrying the Ark touched the river – it rolled back allowing them to cross on dry ground – just like crossing the Red Sea. It is right across from the Dead Sea – the very lowest part of the world below sea level. It is not cool there at all – it is a desert region and is hardly ever cold enough for anyone to wear a cloak during the day. Yet, Bartimaeus gets up, throws away his cloak and follows Jesus on the road. This is a stark contrast with the recent request from the disciples. Do you remember how, James and John, as we talked about last week, came

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to Jesus and asked to have a seat –one to His left and the other to His right - requesting for power, prestige, and glory. Just like Jesus’ restoring the sight of the blind man in Bethsaida, in Mark chapter 8, the healing of Bartimaeus is a sign that Jesus is trying to open His followers’ eyes. In other words – are you seeing what you are seeing? It is time for the world to see Jesus not just as Messiah but as the One who would give His life to bring salvation to each one of us, to sinners, to the entire world. When Jesus says, “*Your faith has healed you*”, the early Christian would see those words with a wider and deeper meaning. The key to salvation, is faith – believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior. How many times have I stood here and told you that you cannot earn your way to heaven – all you have to do is believe that Jesus is Lord. That’s why anyone from all walks of life, can be saved. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus? “*God so loved the WORLD*” that’s everybody – but it breaks my heart that not everybody chooses Jesus. The key to salvation is believing in Jesus; the invitation is to the whole world - and often it’s the people who see that they cannot control the situation that they are in, and give it to God – calling out to Him, like Bartimaeus – asking Him to take control and heal them and their situation. It doesn’t have to be blindness, it can be anything – a lost love, but giving it to Him. Help me Jesus! There are many here today who have prayed that prayer and know how powerful that is. Ask Him to take control. I want to suggest to you that faith consists of recognizing who Jesus is and trusting that He has the power to rescue you – physically, emotionally, and or spiritually.

I want you to just imagine what it might have been like in the crowd that day in Jericho. It’s hot, dry, and dusty. You’re very excited; you’re walking with Jesus; you’re going up to Jerusalem on the old Roman road. You hear a voice of someone shouting from the roadside. What an annoyance – it’s another person that is trying to get to Jesus! It might even be dangerous. You are hearing Jesus called “*the Son of David*,” and someone from the Temple or a Pharisee might get upset and start to cause problems. Jesus reveals the character of the compassionate healer as He turns to speak to this blind man. Bartimaeus doesn’t just sit there – but he gets up – jumps to his feet and goes right to Jesus. This blind man has truly realized that he can no longer do it himself – and he seeks Jesus’ healing. Jesus recognizes this man’s heart and asks him, “*What do you want me to do for you?*” Bartimaeus honestly gives his problem to Jesus and tells Him, “*Rabbi, I want to see.*” (Mark 10:51) When we seek Jesus and His compassion, His love, and His healing – He gives of Himself – and touches the problem. His response to this man’s surrender is “Go, your faith has healed you.” (Mark 10:52) With these words, Bartimaeus immediately got his sight back and without hesitation, without a second thought, followed Jesus.

It is easy for us to imagine ourselves there, witnessing this as we follow the words from the Gospel, but now imagine yourself as this blind man, Bartimaeus. Would you have had the courage, after years of struggling and begging, having to rely on others to lead you around – would you have had the courage that day to seek Jesus’ healing? Imagine sitting by the side of the road, being humbled to seek the help and financial assistance of others.

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There are many instances in the life of Jesus that people had the courage to seek His mercy, compassion, healing, and love. They had to come to the realization that there was nothing more that they could do for themselves – life was beyond their control. It is not easy to come to grips that you are powerless over the situation in your life. Think about the man with the leprosy, the centurion who sought healing for his servant, the woman with the bleeding issue for 12 years, the man who was lowered on his matt by his friends just to be able to see Jesus – seeking healing, the man born blind, and the man who sat by the pool of Bethesda – awaiting the healing that he knew would come one day. It is remarkable that in John 20: *“Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”* This is just a short list of people who knew that they needed a healer, a savior. Our Savior, Our Healer, Our Lord Jesus loves you and He is willing to help you! All you need to do is ask.

We all have something, whether it is a physical ailment, an emotional issue, or even a spiritual roadblock, that is getting in the way of our being the people that we believe God wants us to be, the person that God made us to be. So, can you be like Bartimaeus and call out to Jesus, and when He calls you near, can you put everything aside and go to Him – or would you rather keep trying to do it yourself? When Jesus asks you what you want Him to do, ask Him for freedom, ask Him for salvation, ask Him for healing. And when you get it, be prepared to follow Jesus for the rest of your life.