

Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost, October 28, 2018, Liturgical Year “B”

St. Andrew’s Anglican Church, Douglas, GA

The Rev. Fr. John E. Commins+ Rector

Scripture: Mark 10:46-52

“Do It Yourself?”

Was that a game yesterday? What game? Well, when I lived in Jacksonville for none years, I was indoctrinated that it was the Florida-Georgia Game, but when I came to Georgia I was told it was the Georgia-Florida Game. Georgia came out kicking yesterday! I was pretty pleased, as a matter of fact I was so tied up yesterday and as I was leaving, Amy was here setting the altar and getting everything ready for today, and she reminded me of the game and I headed home to out the game on TV. I enjoyed every moment of it. It was quite a crowd! Y’all are passionate about the Dawgs. It was a great game.

It was quite a week. I got a message from some people in the parish of a need. It is always important for us to respond to needs – just like Jesus responds to our needs. I guess it was about a year ago there was a horse, and the horse’s name was Dutch. Dutch wasn’t doing well and it looked like he was on his way out. I was asked if I could anoint and pray for Dutch, and I did. Friday morning, I had the opportunity to see Dutch again, and give thanks for him. He recognized me, and came right over to me. I was there for another reason. There was another horse named Chip who was going to have surgery that morning. I am a firm believer that if we come before Jesus and ask Him for anything – He blesses that, He wants us to come to Him. And so, Chip does not like his face to be touched – so what did I do? I went over and started stroking his nose and up his forehead. When I stopped – all of a sudden, boom – he pounded his hoof. He wanted more! So, I gave him more, and I was talking to him and calming him down. Boom – there goes the hoof – once, twice, so I responded. Then it was time to pray because the surgery was going to take place in just a few minutes. I anointed the star on his forehead. Then I went and said goodbye to Dutch as I was leaving, and he put his head on my shoulder. They could tell what I was there for, and who I was there for. What a blessing! Chip is doing fine, I checked with, well... I will just keep it anonymous, but those of you who are horse lovers – you know who I am talking about. A real blessing to be able to minister – somebody said to me ‘do you believe in blessing animals?’ I said yes, because when you bless an animal you are really blessing the owner as well. The lady who owns the horse, her name is Sue, and she did not forget what happened with Dutch. Now I believe she will never forget what God did for Chip.

When I was growing up, there was a TV commercial that was very memorable for one line – “Mother please, I’d rather do it myself!” Does anyone remember that Anacin commercial? It was even better than the “speecy, spicy meatballs.” You could hear people all over repeating that catch phrase and there would be a lot of laughter. “Mother please, I’d rather do it myself!” This poor woman had such a headache – she was about to explode. We were laughing at this poor woman’s headache – yet all the while agreeing with her wanting the freedom to push back and do it herself. We are a society that rewards people for doing things ourselves, and standing on that principle. It is OK to know when to ask for assistance, ask for help, and guys - even ask for directions. I remember an old Tim the Tool Man Taylor Show, and they were in the car, driving in Detroit, and while they were lost – Tim would not ask for directions. They ended up

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in Canada or something – but it hit home that people sometimes are too proud to ask for directions, or even to ask how to put things together. How many people read instructions when they open up a box? I believe that it is character building for us to exhaust all available measures to try to take care of a situation -BUT – there has to come a time when we realize that a situation is beyond our means and our capability to resolve.

Today’s Holy Gospel has such an example. As Jesus and His followers were leaving Jericho – near the Jordan and the Dead Sea, they heard the call of a blind man – the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, Bar meaning son of, Timaeus being his father, seeking the help of Jesus. He was 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, seeking the mercy of Jesus to do what they could not do, to go where they could not go.

Jesus asks the blind beggar ‘*What do you want me to do for you?*’ 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? We are talking about 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. Isn’t that what we all want?

Could you imagine seeing for the first time in many years? I saw this video on the internet of a man who had been color blind. He was seeing things differently than we did. His family gave him a surprise. They gave him a pair of glasses that he was able to put on and colors popped out. He began to weep. Could you imagine Bartimaeus seeing things for the very first time and seeing Jesus and 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 understood what Jesus was all about, he is already a man of faith, courage and true discipleship. He recognizes in his heart of hearts that Jesus is the ‘son of David,’ and therefore the Messiah. He clearly believes Jesus can help him and 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.

Understanding the terrain and the weather - Jericho is across from the Jordan, you can read about that in Joshua, when they came across and they spied on the city of Jericho, went around the walls and they fell. It is right across from the Dead Sea – the very lowest part of the world below sea level. It is not cool there – it is a desert region and is hardly ever cold enough for anyone to wear a cloak during the day. But yet, he 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, came to Jesus and asked to have a seat – one to His left and the other to His right - a request for power, prestige and glory. Just like Jesus’ restoring the sight of the blind man in Bethsaida, Mark chapter 8, the healing of Bartimaeus is a sign that

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Jesus is trying to open His followers’ eyes. 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 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. That’s why anyone from all walks of life, can be saved. What did Jesus say? “*God so loved the WORLD*” that’s everybody – but not everybody chooses Jesus. The key to salvation is believing in Jesus; the invitation is to the 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 – to take control and heal them and their situation. I want to suggest to you that faith consists of recognizing who Jesus is and trusting that He has the power to rescue you, maybe even rescue the horse – physically, emotionally, and 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. It’s an annoyance. ‘Oh what? 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 the blind man. Bartimaeus doesn’t just sit there – but he gets up – somebody led him to Jesus, 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 the blind man. 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.

There are many instances in the life of Jesus that people had the courage to seek the mercy, compassion, healing and love of Jesus. They had to come to the realization that there was nothing more that they could do for themselves – it was beyond their control. It is not easy to come to grips that you are, in essence, 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 he knew would one day come. This is just a short list of people

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who knew that they needed a healer, a savior. Our Savior, Our Healer, Our Lord Jesus loves you and He is willing.

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 and 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 do it yourself? When Jesus asks you what you want Him to do, go for it! Ask for freedom, ask for salvation. And when you get it, be prepared to follow Jesus wherever He goes next.