

## Written Copy: Mark 10:51-52 "What Should He Do for You?"

22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday @ Pentecost – Proper 25

Sunday, October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Text: Mark 10:51-52

<sup>49</sup> And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you." <sup>50</sup> And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. <sup>51</sup> And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight." <sup>52</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well." And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.

### The text's intent

It contrasts the crowd's vision and purpose for what Jesus is doing with the reason the Father sent Him, which is to gather the blind, the lame, all those that are often considered unwanted and unworthy. Bartimaeus had heard of Jesus, and so had a weak but not fully informed faith. He believed Jesus had the divine power and mercy from God to help him. He had a faith more fully informed than the crowd that tried to silence him. Jesus confirms Bartimaeus' faith and informs it even more. He teaches the crowd that He is hear to have mercy on even the likes of a blind beggar. He opens Bartimaeus' physical and spiritual eyes so that he now sees and believes in Jesus as Lord and Savior, so that he is healed spiritually. His call has given Bartimaeus saving faith that changes his life, which is made manifest in Bartimaeus following Jesus on the road that will lead to the cross, to the empty tomb, and from there to eternal life.

### Focus Statement:

Jesus showed Himself to be the Merciful God incarnate that Jeremiah prophesied about, who came to call all people out of sinful exile and restore them to be the perfect creation God had made them to be in the beginning. He came to begin that work healing the bodily deformities such as blindness, that sin has caused. But He came to do the greater healing of restoring spiritual sight to see Him as Lord and Savior through His work on the cross and the empty tomb. He came to call us and enable us to follow Him all the way to eternal life.

### Function Statement:

#### Why it's important to know:

Who do I see as unworthy of Jesus time, not encouraging them or telling them to cry out to Him? How often do I see myself as unworthily crying out to Him, annoying Him with the same well-worn requests? How often do I forget that His true mission is the complete restoration of me body and soul? In what ways do I neglect to follow Him to the cross, the tomb, and to the resurrection?

#### What the hearer should do as a result:

Realize that our merciful Savior will never tell us to shup up and be quiet when we cry out to Him for mercy. That He will always stop, listen, and respond in ways that are beyond what we can imagine or ask. That with spiritual eyes open we too are to follow Him to the cross, the tomb, and all the way to eternal life.

### Subject Sentence: Our Merciful Savior calls us and heals us body and soul

## **Introduction:**

Those of you who are parents and grandparents have your favorite stories of kids in the backseat bugging you with “Are we there yet? Can we stop for Ice Cream? Can we go down the toy aisle and pick something out?” And you have stories where these requests were asked not only once, but over and over and over again until you were ready stuff a rag in the mouth of the child or children badgering you.

I remember when I was a preteen my parents took my brother and I on a trip to England. Mom worked for the Social Security Administration as a Supervisor, and in those days, it paid to work for the government. She was paid fairly well. And through her job she was able to get a nice discount on a travel package that included airfare, rooms at Charing Cross Hotel in London just a block or two from Trafalgar Square. Here are some pictures of these locations (*Show pictures of Trafalgar Square and Charing Cross Hotel*). It was long enough ago that I can only really remember the trip two dimensionally through pictures. Now, these aren't my pictures. The ones I took didn't fare very well over time. I had one of those cheap Kodak cameras. The throw away cameras that came later actually took better pictures than mine did. My brother had a nicer camera that I was envious of. I knew his pictures would come out much better. So, I wanted one like his. I'd been bugging Mom and Dad for a camera before we left for the trip and received that inexpensive Kodak. My brother on the other hand, being 5 years older than me, was entrusted with a much more expensive camera. I remember seeing a nicer camera in a shop in Charing Cross Hotel and began a campaign to get Mom and Dad to buy it for me. I asked for it outright a couple of times, taking them by the hand over to see it on display. But they said no. I didn't give up. I kept up the campaign in what I thought was a suitably subtle way. As we traveled around seeing the sights, I would comment about how my camera wasn't doing justice in capturing this once in a lifetime trip. Dad listened to these comments that were border line whining for a while, until we were in the gardens adjacent to Buckingham Palace. I remember him turning around, and in a loud firm voice that was the way he yelled in public, said “Your camera is fine for you ‘ptography’” He was so angry he misspoke the word ‘photography’. While I would laugh about it later on, at the time it was not funny. I remember walking away trying to hide the tears that were flowing from my eyes.

Flash forward around 30 years later. My Dad is in the hospital, preparing to enter hospice, dying of emphysema. My brother and I took turns sitting with him. He kept trying to pull off the leads, the oxygen tube, and the IV out of him. And I was trying to keep him from doing so. I would tell him, “Dad, these need to stay in you.” And he would keep trying to pull them out. I finally lost my patience and grabbed his arms, holding them down, and secured them in the straps attached to the hospital bed. He yelled and cursed at me, and I did the same back. It was after he died, remembering back to this time, I made the connection with how I lost my patience with him just as he used to do with me. What goes around comes around, I guess you could say. I know some of you have had your patience stretched by parents suffering from dementia and Alzheimer's.

These and other similar instances with my dad served to color my initial relationship with God when He called me back into His fold. I learned that under no circumstances should I keep bugging my earthly father about the same thing over and over. If I did, bad things would happen. I tried to be more patient with my own children. But I'm sure they could tell you their own stories of how their Dad, in a fit of exasperation, lost it with them. These things came to my mind as I considered the plight of blind beggar Bartimaeus in our Gospel Lesson.

### **Jesus Calls Blind Bartimaeus**

As our Gospel Lesson begins Jesus is leaving Jericho. He is taking the road most Jews traveling from Galilee to Jerusalem would take to avoid travelling through Samaria. Tagging along with Him are not only His Disciples but a crowd who are joining Him on the trip to Jerusalem for Passover. They are not just traveling with Him because they are both headed to the same place. They are following Him because they have seen and heard the fantastic things He has done: the miraculous healing, the feeding of 5,000 plus, His raising people from the dead, and His teaching with authority that is different from any other Rabbi. Members of this crowd will follow Him into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, enthusiastically welcoming Him as their Messiah King, hoping that He would use His power to cast out the Romans and restore the kingdom of Israel as it had been at the time of King David. They consider themselves to be on a mission with Him.

**Mark 10:47-48** <sup>47</sup> **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!"** <sup>48</sup> **And many rebuked him, telling him to be silent. But he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"**

But then here is this blind beggar Bartimaeus shrieking at Jesus on the side of the road as He is passing by. To the crowd this was really annoying and inappropriate for this important moment. Jesus is headed to kick some Roman butt and restore the Jewish kingdom. He doesn't have time for this dirty unclean beggar. What's more, they probably suspect that he did something to deserve his fate; that his blindness was God's judgment for some sin committed by him or his father. They are saying "Just shut up for God's sake Bartimaeus" And I can hear my earthly father's voice in that crowd.

Now it's important to note that Mark in his Gospel recounting does not often mention Jesus as "The Son of David", an Old Testament reference that was understood to be Messianic. This makes his inclusion of this term here all the more important. This blind beggar didn't have a complete understanding of who Jesus was or what He had come to accomplish. But He did understand that Jesus had divine power to heal, and used it in keeping with the mercy that the LORD God had shown His people Israel in ages past. And so, blind Bartimaeus cries out to this 'Son of David', "Have mercy on me."

**Mark 10:49** <sup>49</sup> **And Jesus stopped and said, "Call him." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart. Get up; he is calling you."**

Notice the change in attitude of the crowd once Jesus stops and takes a personal interest in this man. It changes their whole attitude toward him, from dismissive to encouraging. They turn to this beggar they had just moments before told to 'Shut up' and now say, "Hey, it's 'gonna' be alright! Cheer up! He wants to see you!" What crosses my mind at this point, and what I would invite you to ponder for a moment is that change in attitude of the crowd. They turned from being dismissive and annoyed at Bartimaeus shrieking and crying out, just like my Dad was when I kept on pleading for something. They turned from being as cold and uncaring as I was in exasperation with my Dad in the hospital, and became encouraging and helpful, once they knew this blind beggar mattered to Jesus. Consider how are we sometimes like the crowd in our treatment of those we deem unworthy to hear the Gospel call, unworthy of our time, unworthy of our encouragement and help. How much should we, knowing that Jesus came to call the likes of those we consider to be unwanted and underserving, change our attitude to be more like the crowd after Jesus calls Bartimaeus?

And how does this blind beggar respond? **Mark 10:50** **And throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus.** He jumps up, and as quickly as he can, with help from some of those in the crowd who had just a few moments ago told him to shut up, comes and bows before Jesus. When Jesus calls me to spend private devotional time with Him, do I jump up and do so? When He calls you to spend time with Him in Bible Study or worship, do you leap up at the opportunity?

**Mark 10:51** **And Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" And the blind man said to him, "Rabbi, let me recover my sight."**

Jesus knew what this man wanted. Jesus wanted the crowd as well as this man himself to hear his prayer of supplication. He wanted blind Bartimaeus to give voice to his heart's desire. Jesus wanted to make clear that He was not going brush this beggar off or tell him "You are unworthy of My time". He wanted the crowd to see that in this Messianic prophecy was being fulfilled. **Jeremiah 31:8-9a** <sup>8</sup> **Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman and she who is in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here.** <sup>9</sup> **With weeping they shall come, and with pleas for mercy I will lead them back.** And here is one of those blind ones who the crowds would've dismissed as not worthy, but that's not how the Father sees him. And that's not how God in human form sees him. Jesus had come to call and to heal those just like Bartimaeus, just like you and me.

## **Jesus comes to restore us**

**52a And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well."**

This is Jesus at work with the loving mercy of the LORD, fulfilling the prophecy of our Old Testament Lesson. He came to restore physical sight for such as this blind beggar. But He came to restore more than that, to restore spiritual sight to all who had fallen away from the LORD, who were trusting in themselves and their law keeping instead of the promise the sacrifices pointed to. Jesus came to restore mankind to once again be precious children of the Heavenly Father. He came to restore our relationship with our Creator God by removing from us that which would separate us eternally from Him, our sin. He was headed to Jerusalem to be the only sacrifice that would heal our broken relationship with God. He came to be the sinless lamb of sacrifice upon the altar that was the cross, to take all God's wrath for our sin, and pave the way for each and every person to return to the Father.

**Isaiah 61:1-2 <sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn...** Jesus came to do this great work of restoration that Isaiah describes. He came to release us as captives to sin, death and the devil by unleashing God's vengeance on these enemies through His death and resurrection.

**Mark 10:52a And Jesus said to him, "Go your way; your faith has made you well."**

He restores you the same way He restored this blind beggar, by the gift of faith. Faith is the power by which we can have and hold all that Jesus has done for us. It is the gift that makes all that Jesus did for me, for you. And you have received it in full through your baptism. Notice Jesus says, "Your faith has made you well". This means more than just restored sight, be it physical or spiritual. It means that what had brought you the terminal unwellness of spiritual death has been removed. The word that is translated "made you well" can also be translated as "Your faith has saved you", your faith has restored you to an eternal right relationship with God.

## **Summoned By Jesus, We Follow Him**

Those words that Bartimaeus cried out to Jesus should be very familiar to you. You also sung them out to our LORD just a little bit ago after hearing the Gospel promise of the Absolution. You sang them out to the Triune God: Lord (Heavenly Father) have mercy, Christ (God the Son) have mercy, Lord (Holy Spirit) have mercy. Knowing and believing by faith the Absolution promise that despite our sins we have been restored to a right relationship with our Triune God as His children, we too cry out asking Him to act mercifully on our behalf. A little later in this service our Heavenly Father will give us a chance to lift before Him more particular petitions just as the Blind Beggar did before Jesus.

But just as Jesus knew what Bartimaeus desired, so too He knows what we truly need even before we ask. And He is here at work in this worship service blessing us with the gifts of faith and His love.

**Mark 10:52b** **And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him on the way.**

How did Bartimaeus respond to the gifts he received? He left his place at the side of the road and began to follow Jesus. In what ways has our Savior opened your spiritual eyes through this Gospel Lesson? How has He given you a clearer picture of what He came to do for you, as well as for “the least of these”? How is He calling us as His Church to change our attitude of ignoring those around us whom we deem unworthy for our time, not important enough to minister to with the gifts He has given us for this very purpose? What ways could you, as a member of Lamb of God, be encouraging voices, be a helper like the crowd was that brought blind Bartimaeus to Jesus? As we follow Jesus on the road as His disciples, who can we come along side and be a Gospel witness through our time, talents, and treasures to bring to Jesus?

## **Conclusion**

My earthly father could certainly be a jerk sometimes. And I certainly was at times with him toward the end. But Jesus came to restore me to a right relationship with Him despite my sinful heart and action. And having been restored to a right relationship with Him, I know in eternity I will live restored to a right relationship with my earthly father, a better and fuller one than I could ever have in this world.

There have certainly been times when I have acted like the crowd that originally treated Bartimaeus shamefully, dismissing those that Jesus came to restore to His kingdom. But His gift of faith is changing my heart and mind toward them. His gift of faith is giving me a clearer vision of the work He has for me to do in His kingdom. How about you? How is He at work in you through this Gospel Lesson to open your spiritual eyes to the need you have, as well as the need that is around you? How is He confirming your place as His restored and forgiven child? How is He calling you to follow Him on the road that leads to the cross, to the empty tomb, and in the end to life everlasting? Who is He calling you, calling me, calling us as His Church to come alongside and be His voice calling the Blind Bartimaeus of this world to join us on that road to Eternal Life? Amen

