



## The Parish of Wellow

### Mark 10:46-52 - Blind Bartimaeus

#### Passage, Talk Notes and Questions

Please feel free to take these talk notes home with you and you may wish to find some time during this week to consider the questions below.

#### 1. Talk Passage – Mark 10:46-52

**46** Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means ‘son of Timaeus’), was sitting by the roadside begging. **47** When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, ‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’

**48** Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’

**49** Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ So they called to the blind man, ‘Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.’ **50** Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

**51** ‘What do you want me to do for you?’ Jesus asked him. The blind man said, ‘Rabbi, I want to see.’

**52** ‘Go,’ said Jesus, ‘your faith has healed you.’ Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

#### 2. Talk Notes

##### Introduction and Context - Mark 10:46

- Have you ever felt that life is passing you by?
- ‘A blind man, Bartimaeus (which means ‘son of Timaeus’), was sitting by the roadside begging’ (Mark 10:46) That is how Bartimaeus must have felt. He had been sitting on the sidelines of life. He was begging because he was blind and had no way of making a living for himself. He had probably been sitting on this major highway from the east of Israel into Jerusalem for many years begging from the steady flow of people heading on their way to the capital city.
- He probably had a prime position just outside Jericho catching those starting their 17 mile journey to Jerusalem. This journey would have taken approximately a day to complete. It wasn’t an easy route with many ups and downs on the way with Jerusalem being 3,000 feet higher than Jericho.
- ‘Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city’ (Mark 10:46). Jesus and his disciples, like many others, are on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate one of the great festivals: Passover. It would be like us today journeying towards friends and family for Christmas. We know that for Jesus this is the last time he will see Jericho as he is heading towards Good Friday and the Cross.
- As Bartimaeus listens to the crowd moving in front of his begging position he learns that Jesus is about to pass by. He has obviously heard a great deal about Jesus and clearly has great respect for him calling him ‘Son of David’ (Mark 10:47) and ‘Rabbi’ (Mark 10:51). By calling Jesus ‘Son of David’ (Mark 10:47) Bartimaeus was recognising him as the Messiah and by calling him ‘Rabbi’ (Mark 10:51) he was acknowledging that Jesus was a great teacher and miracle worker.
- Bartimaeus now **ACTS** to change his situation.

- God has so much to give us, but many of us are too busy pursuing the things of this world to be passionate about the things of God, and so we never ask. We think that spiritual gifts from God could not possibly be as wonderful as the things we can buy, feel and touch. But God rewards and blesses those who passionately seek him and what he has to give.
- *Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.* (Mark 10:52) I can just see Bartimaeus jumping and dancing on his the way to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem for the first time with his sight. Once life had been passing him by, but now he was fully enjoying the blessings of God. He had entered into life in its fullness and followed Jesus.

#### Conclusion

- Jesus said, “*The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it*” (Matthew 13:45-46). Jesus Christ is the pearl of great price, and to lose him is to lose everything. Those who fail to ACT, to ask, to receive God’s call and trust in Him are robbed of God’s greatest gift – Christ himself. Those who fail to be passionate in their quest of Christ, settle for a life of begging for the meagre things this world tries to offer, but which can never satisfy. Those who fail to pursue Christ end up following their own foolishness and missing out on the great gift of life that God has waiting for each of us.
- Will we be like Bartimaeus who ACTS as Jesus passes him by? Will we be persistent in our asking? Will be quick to respond to His calling and finally will we be passionate in our trusting? If we are willing to do these three things then like Bartimaeus we will not only see life differently but we will experience it differently as well.

#### 3. Questions to consider at home?

- 3.1 What were Jesus and his disciples doing in Jericho? Where were they going and where had they come from?
- 3.2 How would you describe Bartimaeus?
- 3.3 What does Bartimaeus do to change his circumstances?
- 3.4 What was Jesus encouraging when he states in the Sermon on the Mount: “*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened*” (Matthew 7:7-8).
- 3.5 How would you describe ‘calling?’ What do you think God may be calling you personally, and your church family collectively, to be doing?
- 3.6 By ‘*throwing his cloak aside*’ what was Bartimaeus demonstrating? How do we individually and collectively as a church family ‘*throw our cloaks aside*?’
- 3.7 Imagine yourself in the crowd that day. What do you see and hear?
- 3.8 Imagine yourself as Bartimaeus that day. What do you see and hear?
- 3.9 Imagine yourself as Jesus that day. What do you see and hear?
- 3.10 What has Bartimaeus seen that the world around him has not?

Matthew Street 26<sup>th</sup> February 2023

He **ASKS**

Jesus **CALLS**

He **TRUSTS**

He **SEES**

- What about us? Do we, like Bartimaeus want to change our current situation? If we do then we too like him need to **ACT**. We need to ask Jesus to change our current circumstances, await his call and then trust him in the course of action he recommends. Who knows, like Bartimaeus we may end up seeing things in a very different light.

#### **ASKS** - Mark 10:47-48

- Everything starts with asking: *‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’* (Mark 10:47) Bartimaeus shouts at the top of his voice.
- We won’t receive anything from God if we do not ask him for anything. I believe up in heaven that there are a line of presents with each of our individual names on. These are presents that God is longing to give us if only we will ask him for them. But so often we don't. And sometimes we may need to ask God for something more than once.
- I am sure that those of you who have children can resonate with this. Have you noticed how children when it comes up to Christmas or their Birthday give a long list of what they want. And as a parent it is sometimes difficult to quite work out what it is they really want. One way is wait to see if the same thing is asked for more than once.
- I am sure that sometimes the same is true with God. We have to keep asking, in spite of what people say or the discouragements we face. *‘Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me!’* (Mark 10:48) Like Bartimaeus we have to keep calling out to God, even when it seems like he is passing us by. We have to call to Jesus Christ even when people tell us that our request is not valid or important enough. We have to be persistent even when we think our need is impossible and cannot be met.
- We have to ask, and when God does not seem to hear us, ask again. When we ask again and we do not receive an answer, then knock. When you knock and do not receive an answer, then seek. Jesus said, *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened”* (Matthew 7:7-8). The kingdom of God belongs to those who are persistent and keep coming to God in faith, even when their first cry does not seem to be heard.
- Bartimaeus’ persistence paid off, because if he had allowed the people to silence him, he would never have received his healing. If he had been afraid that his request was not important enough to bother Jesus, he would never have met Jesus. If he had been afraid that he might annoy Jesus with his request, life would have passed him by and there would have been no change in his life. Jesus taught that we *“should always pray and not give up”* (Luke 18:1).

#### **CALLS** - Mark 10:49

- *‘Jesus stopped and said, ‘Call him.’ So they called to the blind man, ‘Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.’* (Mark 10:49) Notice what Jesus does in response to Bartimaeus’ persistent asking, he stops in his tracks. He hears the desperate cry of someone over all the other voices in the crowd leaving Jericho that day on their way to celebrate Passover in Jerusalem. Jesus not only hears with his ears, but he hears with his heart. The cry of one man’s need touched the heart of Christ and he stops.
- But as Jesus stops and calls to Bartimaeus he is effectively saying to him do you want to leave your life of begging for something new? Do you want to step out of your comfort zone and experience life in a totally new way?
- Jesus had done the same thing to Peter when he called him out of the boat and encouraged Peter to walk on the water: *‘Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to you on the water.’ ‘Come,’ he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came towards Jesus’* (Matthew 14:28-9)
- God likewise is calling all of us to experience life in a totally new way. For some of us that may mean starting a whole new journey with Him for others that will mean stepping out of our comfort zones in faith and trusting God as he leads us into a new experience of what being in relationship with Him is like.

#### **TRUSTS** - Mark 10:50-51

- *‘Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.’* (Mark 10:50). Bartimaeus would have most likely spread his cloak out in front of him to collect coins that were thrown his way. By *‘throwing his cloak aside’* Bartimaeus was in effect leaving his life of begging behind him and grasping his new life with Jesus.
- He was probably leaving behind his special pitch on the key highway from Jericho to Jerusalem. Most likely he had been there for years allowing life to pass him by. He was risking all by leaving everything behind him and coming to Jesus.
- Bartimaeus demonstrates his complete trust in Christ. He leaves the familiar for the unfamiliar. He steps out of his metaphorical boat, out of his comfort zone and places his unknown future into the hands of Jesus.
- *‘What do you want me to do for you?’ Jesus asked him.* (Mark 10:51) Up till now Bartimaeus had only asked for mercy from Jesus. Bartimaeus had not said whether he just wanted a gift of money, or whether he wanted something more. Think of how tragic it would have been if he had only wanted to win the lottery that day. That is, after all, about as far as it goes for most people in our society today. They see money as the answer to all their problems rather than Jesus.
- Bartimaeus on the other hand wants something far more valuable, his sight.

#### **SEES** - Mark 10:52

- Bartimaeus had no doubt heard about all the miracles that Jesus had done but he trusts that Jesus will do one for him. He is a shining example of someone who believes in a God that loves to make the impossible, possible. He wasn’t going to let Jesus walk by him that day. He shouted out *‘Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!’* (Mark 10:47) and despite the crowd trying to silence him he shouted or asked all the more. When Jesus called, he came.
- He got his sight: *‘Go,’ said Jesus, ‘your faith has healed you.’* (Mark 10:52)