

The Healing of Blind Bartimaeus – Mark 10:46-52 – March 7, 2021

⁴⁶ They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. ⁴⁷ When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁸ Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” ⁴⁹ Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” ⁵⁰ So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. ⁵¹ Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher,^[a] let me see again.” ⁵² Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

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“What do you want me to do for you?”

In this Lenten worship series, we have mentioned several times about asking for what we need, asking on behalf of others. Bartimaeus wanted to be able to see again. In being able to see, Bartimaeus was able to be self-sufficient, not depending upon for what he needed to survive. And, as the preacher tells us today, after his healing Bartimaeus follows Jesus on his way, so that Jesus’ way becomes Bartimaeus’ way. His healing leads to service.

“Throwing off his cloak” seems to be a big deal. Any possessions a blind person had – or anyone with some kind of condition which put them on the margins – any possessions would have been extremely precious to them. The fact that Bartimaeus threw off his cloak would be an indication that he is so confident he will be healed that he knew he wouldn’t need the cloak anymore. Our preacher today suggests Bartimaeus may be thinking that others might take the cloak from him before he is flogged. If that’s the case, he needed not to worry. Jesus had only good intentions for Bartimaeus.

Another important thing to notice from this passage is that Bartimaeus is the first in Mark’s gospel to refer to Jesus as “Son of David.” Even though he is physically blind, Bartimaeus can see who Jesus is. Crowds of people will call Jesus “Son of David” during the Palm Sunday parade which is just days away from this incident in Jericho.

“What do you want me to do for you?” Jesus asks.

What do you want Jesus to do for you? What do you need Jesus to do for you?