

Mark 10: 46-52

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.**

**When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth,
he began to shout out and say,
'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'**

**Many sternly ordered him to be quiet,
but he cried out even more loudly,**

**'Son of David, have mercy on me!'
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.'**

**So *throwing off* his cloak, he *sprang* up and came to Jesus.
Then Jesus said to him,**

'What do you want me to do for you?'

**The blind man said to him,
'My teacher, let me see again.'**

Jesus said to him,
'Go; your faith has made you well.'

Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Meditation

Do you know what your heart's desire is?
What is that one thing that would entice you to give up
just about everything in order to achieve it or attain it?

Do you know?

In our reading today,
I am so impressed that Bartimaeus knows exactly
what is his heart's desire.
and he knows exactly who can give it to him...

Imagine this:

On a hot, sunny and dusty day a throng of noisy people
walk through the city gate coming out of the city.
This throng includes women, men, and children, probably some dogs and
maybe even a few other animals!

and as they leave Jericho,
sitting on the side of the road,
is a blind beggar, Bartimaeus.

Bartimaeus finds out that it is Jesus
and tries to catch his attention...

by shouting at him,
“Jesus, Jesus” but Jesus doesn’t hear him.
Again Bartimaeus shouts: ‘Son of David’!
Woah....that would have caused more than a few folks,
to give Bartimaeus “the look.”

Now apparently some of them aren’t too happy with Bartimaeus...
because Mark says: “Many sternly ordered him to be quiet”
but the more they tell him to be quiet, the louder he gets...
Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!
Finally Bartimaeus’ voice breaks through the commotion
catches Jesus’ attention,
and Jesus stops...

Can’t you almost feel the hush come over the crowd...

What is Jesus going to do?

“Call him here” he instructs his disciples...
So they call to Bartimaeus:
‘Take heart; get up, he is calling you.’
and now here’s the part I love:

Bartimaeus jumps up, throws off his cloak, and goes to Jesus.
Now, throwing off his cloak is a really big deal:
it was his only piece of clothing.
It was his bed and blanket.
It was all that he had....
To toss his cloak to the side,
left Bartimaeus with absolutely nothing and naked besides...

**So here is this blind, naked beggar standing before Jesus
and the master says to him:**

“What do you want me to do for you?”

**Tenderly, Bartimaeus responds,
“My teacher, I want to see again.”**

Bartimaeus knew exactly what he needed.

**Remember that all illness was a result of someone’s sin
back in the day.**

**And to be a sinful person was to be shunned, ostracized and
disconnected from your family and your community
so that you would not taint them as well...so you would not make them
impure or unclean...**

**so to be able to see again was not only a request
to be able to physically see
but to rejoin his family,
to become, once again,
a participating member of and his community.**

Was Bartimaeus was desperate? Perhaps...

**But he was also determined and
he trusted that even if he lost his one and only earthly possession
his heart’s desire would be fulfilled
and that a New Life was absolutely possible.**

He wasn’t thinking about what would happen after he died,

but he was hoping for new way of living his life:
right here, right now

‘My teacher, I want to see again’.

Jesus recognized Bartimaeus’ determination and his trust...
and Jesus’ responds:

Bartimaeus: your faith has made you well.

I have said this often, but it bears repeating.

For the first followers of Jesus,
faith was not intellectual agreement to a set of beliefs *about* Jesus,
Faith was a deep *trust* in the presence and the power of a man
whom they deeply loved,

We would do well to learn that lesson.

Pondering this Gospel story,
I wonder what I would say,
if I was in such a position as Bartimaeus:
to be face to face with Jesus.

What would you say if Jesus asked you:

“What would you want me to do for you?”

Do you know?

For any of us, for all of us:

What new ways of Being and Living do we seek?

**Do we know what keeps us from springing up
and asking for our heart's desire?**

**Do we know what we should toss aside so that we won't get tripped up and
miss out on really living Life
on really being involved with our family or our community**

**Do we have the courage, the determination, the desire,
and the faith to discount all those voices that tell us to be quiet
and to speak our heart's desire clearly to the Holy One.**

**If the Holy One would ask anyone of us
could we speak as gently and confidently like Bartimaeus?
We have 3 weeks left of Lent...
it would serve us well to spend some time reflecting
upon our answer...**

**It would serve us well, in midst of our very busy lives,
in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of work, family, and play...
in the midst of all the chaos of the ups and downs,
the disappointments and the celebrations of our lives,
to consider our answer to the question of Jesus...**

“What do you want me to do for you?” Amen.