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October 27, 2024—Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost  
Officiant –Rev'd Paul Woolley – Organist – Dorothy Miller

JOB 42: 1-6, 10-17; PSALM 34: 1-8, 19-22; HEBREWS 7: 23-28; MARK 10: 46:52

## Sermon

Today, I want to focus both on blind Bartimaeus and the seven characteristics of faith. First, having faith does not make things easy; however, having faith does make things possible.

The New Testament emphasizes that faith in Jesus transforms thoughts, feelings, actions, and beliefs, reshaping life priorities. Understanding faith's significance in believing in God is crucial. Today's Gospel shows a man who trusted and followed Jesus, revealing important truths about our faith.

This marks a key moment in our Lord's ministry, being the final miracle in the Gospel of Mark before His crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus and His disciples travel to Jerusalem, resting and gathering supplies in Jericho. Jesus, known for healing thousands, raising the dead, walking on water, calming storms, and casting out evil spirits, is viewed as both Messiah and miracle worker. Crowds eagerly gather to watch and listen.

In verse 46, as Jesus departs, a large crowd follows—faithful disciples, curious onlookers, those seeking miracles, and travellers headed to Passover in Jerusalem. Jesus, His disciples, and a crowd departed. In towns like Jericho, large gates served as entrances, often surrounded by beggars—some crippled or blind—who depended on aid from family or strangers. They were a common sight near these gates.

Jesus encounters the blind beggar Bartimaeus by the road. Mark mentions only him, while Matthew notes two blind men; only Bartimaeus is named in Mark's Gospel. There are three things about this man.

Bartimaeus is blind, a common condition in Jesus' time due to defects or disease. Jesus often illustrated spiritual blindness with this. The blind and disabled were despised, reduced to begging, and seen as sinners under God's judgment.

Bartimaeus is a blind beggar who lives a hard life among the poor. Bartimaeus is named, which is significant. Most miracles Jesus performed involved unnamed individuals, with few exceptions like Lazarus. Typically, we hear of a miracle's recipient as 'this man's son' or 'the centurion's servant.' Why is this blind man named? By Mark's time, Bartimaeus is well-known in the church, possibly a leader from sharing how Jesus restored his sight and soul.

Bartimaeus symbolizes us before Jesus. We are spiritually lost and desperate before God. Jesus offers new life and direction for this blind man.

Before we move on, Bartimaeus lived his usual life—begging by the road. That day was like any other until Jesus showed up. We all have daily routines: working, schooling, cooking, or attending church. Then, Jesus appears—through a sermon, song, thought, or conversation. He captures attention, enters your life, and transforms it. That happened to Bartimaeus.

Bartimaeus teaches lessons about faith in Jesus. Faith recognizes who Jesus is. In Mark 10:47, when Bartimaeus heard Jesus was nearby, he shouted, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” He believed in Christ and longed for a moment with Him, so when he heard Jesus passing by, he cried out again, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Mark narrates Bartimaeus shouting. "Shout" (krazo) means to cry, scream, or shriek. This was his chance, and he wouldn't miss it.

Bartimaeus shouted to Jesus, calling Him the Son of David, a messianic title. He cried, "Have mercy on me," expressing his heart's plea. Mercy, the act of compassion toward those deserving punishment, was what he sought. With unwavering faith, he saw Jesus clearly, despite his blindness, envisioning hope, healing, mercy, forgiveness, and a new life through Him. Faith sees.

**Faith persists** and doesn't give up. Despite the people's reaction in verse 48—"Be quiet!"—he shouted louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Bartimaeus shouts, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Blind and overwhelmed by the crowd, he is uncertain if Jesus is near. According to Mark, he yells desperately, annoying those around him. Despite the crowd urging him to stop, his need for Jesus overrides any embarrassment. What stops you from experiencing Jesus? What prevents you from pursuing God?

**Number three.** Faith responds. Mark tells us Jesus heard Bartimaeus, stopped, and said, “Tell him to come here.” They called the blind man, saying, “Cheer up! He’s calling you!” Bartimaeus answered and the crowd led him to Jesus. Despite the large crowd shouting praises, Jesus heard one individual cry for mercy. You might think God is too busy, but you are His priority. He loves and hears you. Sometimes, Jesus sends people to encourage and guide you to Him.

**Number four.** Faith abandons. Faith encourages us to let go of the past. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus calls us to leave everything behind and follow Him, symbolizing this through Bartimaeus, who casts off his coat and approaches Jesus.

Why does Mark mention throwing aside his coat? This act symbolizes a genuine faith that leaves everything to follow Christ. Though he had little, he was prepared to abandon it. The cloak represented his past of blindness and begging, symbolizing a rejection of the old for a new life with Jesus. What does your faith in Christ urge you to leave behind? What must you release to follow Jesus? Faith is about letting go.

**Number five.** Faith asks. Mark asks, "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus responds. Bartimaeus calls Jesus "my Rabbi" and "my Master," highlighting his personal faith. For him, Jesus is not a distant figure but intimately connected. That's the essence of faith—it personalizes Jesus. Bartimaeus tells Jesus, "I want to see," a specific and measurable request. Unlike vague prayers, we should specify our needs for God's help in areas like our church, marriage, kids, and friends to recognize His answers clearly. Faith asks.

**Number six.** Faith saves, restores, and heals. In Mark 10:52, Jesus tells the blind man, "Your faith has healed you," using the Greek *sozo*, meaning salvation, not just physical healing. This shows faith in Jesus heals both physically and spiritually. Bartimaeus was saved from blindness and sin. Faith in Christ alone rescues from darkness.

**Number seven.** Faith follows. Bartimaeus changed from beggar to believer. Like the hymn, he can say, "I once was blind, but now I see." He moved from darkness to light, as Mark notes he followed Jesus. The Greek word for "followed" suggests a beginning and continuation. Bartimaeus began following Jesus that day, illustrating discipleship: someone in darkness gains sight through Him. The gospel of Mark encourages us to follow Jesus—leaving behind, taking up our cross, and daily dying for Him. We experience both following and failing Him but discover His grace, mercy, and commitment to our growth. When we falter, He teaches us, helping us rise again.

As you follow Jesus, what acts of faith is God calling you to? What do you need to believe, leave behind, or start doing?

Jesus asked James, John, and Salome: Bartimaeus was blind at first, but saw at the end of Christ's sentence—no surgery or bandages, just sight! He saw humans for the first time, beginning with Jesus 'face.

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Good morning.

Hope you have had a good week. Weather was okay. Rainy today but supposed to be warm this afternoon and the next couple of days. Then drop again to seasonal temperatures. Some sad news, Marion Curran passed on Friday, October 25th. Keep well and hope to see you soon. 🙏❤️ Sheree Lynn