

I WANT TO SEE

Mark 10:46-52 (Key verse 51)

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

In last week's passage, John and James had come to Jesus in need of something and Jesus asked them, "what do you want me do for you?" In today's passage Jesus once again asks a Blind man called Bartimaeus, the same question, "what do you want me to do for you?" However, John and James did not receive what they asked whereas this blind received what he asked for. What is the difference in what these men asked Jesus? how could this blind man who was not even a disciple of Jesus received what he asked? He had been blind for possibly a number of years how come he could have hope in Jesus for healing? Do you have something you want Jesus to do for you? I am sure we have needs in this world, financial, health, passing at school, sin problems and so on. However, whom have we placed our hope in for our needs in this world? and how do we come to Jesus with our request? I pray that we may learn from the faith of this blind man how we can come to Jesus in prayer.

Look at verse 46-47, "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." Jesus and his disciples had come to Jericho and as always a crowd also joined them. At this point in time Jesus had done so many miracles and taught many people the things of the kingdom of God. People had probably heard of Jesus and the amazing miraculous signs he could do. These crowd of people had probably come to Jesus for a number of reasons and needs. Jesus and his disciples were on their way out of the city. Along that road was a blind man by the name of Bartimaeus, who was sitting by the roadside. This man was a beggar, he would probably beg for money, clothes or food. Not only was he a beggar, Bartimaeus was also blind. It is not clear whether he was born blind or something caused his blindness from a certain age. It is actually not easy to beg while being blind. Around Emmerentia there is an old blind man who is usually assisted by some young person to beg for money at the traffic lights. However, Bartimaeus could not get himself anywhere so he begged while sitting along the roadside. Someone had to come and bring him to that spot and also later on someone had to help him return to his place. I suppose it was also a busy road so that he could make his request to as many people as possible. Bartimaeus could not really do much since he was blind, he could not even have hopes like other men who could see. He knew very well that he could not resolve his problem and so he did what he saw was best at the time. Because he could not see, he relied on his hearing and smell to know if there was someone coming or passing by. He really relied on the mercy of people for survival.

In those times, people had believed blindness to be as a result of sin. So, Bartimaeus, probably believed that he was blind because of his sins. Remember in John 9:2, the disciples asked Jesus about a certain blind man, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" However, on this very day, he heard something unbelievable, he probably asked again and again those around him, if indeed it was Jesus of Nazareth passing by, look at verse 47 "When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" he did not waste time but to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" this man's heart was ready and prepared for Jesus. When he heard it was Jesus of Nazareth, he shouted for Jesus's attention. He seems to have known about who Jesus was. Firstly, that Jesus is from the seed of David, and secondly that this Jesus is born from Nazareth. So, he knew

about Jesus, not only that Jesus performed miraculous signs and healed many, but he also knew who Jesus was. Referring to Jesus as the Son of David, is synonymous or same as acknowledging Jesus as Messiah. That the saviour king is from the lineage of David and will come from Nazareth. When Jesus passed by, Bartimaeus did not beg for anything but mercy. This is because, already he recognized that he was a sinner and that Jesus the Messiah is here so he shouted, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!". Look at verse 48, "Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Bartimaeus was so determined and persistent that he shouted all the more when many tried to silence him. Son of David, have mercy on me. Bartimaeus, did not allow anything to hinder him from receiving Jesus attention. He did not shout to Jesus to test if he will receive mercy from Jesus, he shouted at Jesus by faith, being sure of who Jesus was. That Jesus, my saviour, have mercy on me. When Bartimaeus shouted by faith, no one could make him silent. When he shouted by faith, it did not matter what people would think about him. What mattered was that, Jesus the Son of David was passing by. This was his opportunity of a lifetime. There was no way he was going to let Jesus pass by without at least Jesus hearing his request for mercy. All that this blind beggar could do, when Jesus passed by, was to shout. He shouted all the more, Son of David have mercy on me.

There was something amazing about Bartimaeus, how come he never became hopeless for mercy? I mean day in and day out. Bartimaeus did the same thing over and over again. Wake up come sit by the road side and beg. How come Bartimaeus kept doing what he was doing day in, day out? How come when he heard that Jesus was passing by he could have so much conviction for mercy? Also considering that when we are needy we become very selfish and self-centred. Everything becomes about us, when we have a problem the world must stop in order for our problem to be resolved. However, what is amazing is that, Bartimaeus first and foremost recognized who Jesus was before he could make his request. He called Jesus by his identity, "Jesus Son of David...". This shows that Jesus was not a vending machine to Bartimaeus. Jesus was a life saviour to Bartimaeus, he understood that he could come to Jesus as he was, but Jesus will not leave him the same way he came. It was as though he had been on the road side for this very reason, for one day to meet Jesus the Messiah. This was his only meaning in life, to one-day meet and receive mercy from Jesus. I believe this is what kept Bartimaeus going. Jesus kept Bartimaeus hopeful, that though he was a sinner, there was hope because Jesus the Messiah lives and is willing to save.

This makes us then wonder, what then keeps us going daily in our lives? Is it Jesus and the coming kingdom of God? What brings meaning to our lives? What are we living for? Are we living off the mercy of Jesus? Or is our lives dependent on our efforts and abilities? The gospel of salvation gave Bartimaeus living hope on Jesus, to look forward to meeting Jesus one day. The day had arrived to meet Jesus personally and Bartimaeus did not put it to waste, he shouted all the more, Son of David, have mercy on me. This can be our prayer today, like Bartimaeus, let us not allow anything to stand in our way to come daily to Jesus in prayer.

How then did Jesus respond? Jesus then stopped and called for the man. Bartimaeus threw his cloak aside jumped on his feet and came to Jesus [49-50]. Look at verse 51, "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." Jesus asked the blind man, "what do you want me do for you?" does this mean Jesus did not know what Bartimaeus wanted? Of course not, Jesus knew exactly why he asked for mercy. Also considering that Bartimaeus was a Blind helpless man and a beggar, why did not Jesus simply heal his blindness. Why ask him, "What do you want me do for you?" was it not clear, Jesus

the man is helpless and blind. For Jesus it was important and necessary that he make his request and clear. "What do you want me to do for you?" right here Jesus is teaching us something very important. Though God knows what we need before we even ask him in prayer, Jesus still wanted Bartimaeus to make his request. This was for Bartimaeus sake since Jesus already knew what his request was. How does it help or benefit Bartimaeus to make his request direct and clear to Jesus. By making his request clear to Jesus, he is first and foremost acknowledging that Jesus is Lord over him. By being able to ask Jesus affirms that he believes what he asks he can receive. By asking also means he has faith in Jesus to grant him his request. In this way he affirms in his heart that Jesus is Lord and his saviour. In other words Jesus is helping Bartimaeus restore the spiritual order, Jesus is Lord and Bartimaeus is like sheep who depends on his shepherd Jesus to be taken care of. This is what actually happens when we pray, the act of praying, first and foremost declares that Jesus is our shepherd and we are His sheep. So prayer is very beneficial for us because it restores the spiritual order, that is why a Christian cannot live without prayer. A prayer-less life means we are our own saviours and everything depends on us.

Let us look at Bartimaeus response, I will later compare it to how John and James responded, Bartimaeus said, "Rabbi, I want to see." Yet again observe that Bartimaeus does not immediately rush to what he wants which is to see, he starts by saying, "Rabbi..." this again is remarkable, Rabbi means a spiritual teacher or master, which was indeed another identity or description of Jesus. It is only after he has acknowledged Jesus that he now places his request, "I want to see." Bartimaeus had an urgent request to Jesus, this was his only opportunity yet Bartimaeus, starts by saying Rabbi. Master, I want to see. Bartimaeus had faith in who Jesus was, he understood whom he was making his request to. As if to say, Because you are the Messiah, Son of David, you are merciful. Because you are the the master, Rabbi, you can make me see. Because of who Jesus is, Bartimaeus could make his request boldly. Jesus was not some magician or vending machine who could perform miracles, Jesus is a person, the Son of David and a Rabbi. Jesus was a person whom Bartimaeus could relate with personally and encounter personally. Bartimaeus could then say, Jesus my Lord and saviour, I want to see.

Let us go back a little bit and contrast, how John and James and James respond to Jesus question, "what do you want me to do for you?" do you still remember? They said, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory." They wanted to be elevated, to be served, seen and honoured by others. whereas this blind man asked for mercy. They regarded themselves so highly that they thought they deserved to sit at Jesus right and left. Whereas this blind man came with humility, entitled to nothing but depended on the identity of Jesus. As if to say, because Jesus is Messaiah and Master, I can come to him for mercy and lay down my need to him. Unlike John and James, this blind man had nothing to glory in himself, he understood he was a sinner who but dependant on the mercy of God to be able to see.

Look at verse 52 for Jesus response, "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road. Jesus said, go your faith has healed you. What was Bartimaeus faith? Bartimaeus had faith that was determined to reach Jesus. He had faith that knew who Jesus was, Son of David, the Messaiah. The faith that came humbly to Jesus, have mercy on me and faith that was persistent and could clearly tell Jesus what he wants.

In conclusion, Bartimaeus not only was turned from blindness to seeing, he became a worshiper and follower of Jesus. We too met Jesus somewhere along the road in our lives. In our blindness, in our desperation

Jesus awakened our hearts. Jesus heard and still continues to hear our cry. Jesus is compassionate and will always respond to a true repentant heart who knows they are worthy of nothing. Jesus has power to change a sinner into his obedient follower. I pray that we may come to Jesus like Bartimaeus and live meaningful lives for the glory of God. Amen.